

The State of Washington's Search for Intrastate Cooperation

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AS INTRASTATE cooperative systems are developed we must consider why intrastate cooperation is essential, why it may be almost impossible to develop statewide services based on a cooperative system, and what options are available when cooperative systems fail. We need to examine how strength can be developed in an intrastate library/information service system that is based on a cooperative structure. The goals for this article are: (1) to show how cooperative development and operation is the most feasible route to maximize library/information service for a state; (2) to demonstrate that these cooperative efforts are extremely fragile; (3) to provide a strategy to insure maximized library/information service based on cooperative development and system operation; and (4) to present a model of a cooperative planning strategy, based on current efforts in Washington state, that could lead to the provision of maximized service.

Since cooperation is considered a very fragile way to accomplish program objectives, alternatives will be offered. As cooperative programs and library development in general are explored, the concept of change agents — “shakers and movers” — to accomplish specific objectives leading to the attainment of overall program goals will be presented. We need to define change agents in the library/information service field.

CONCERN FOR LIBRARY/INFORMATION SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Considerable resources continue to be spent for the development of library services in the United States. For example, in the state of

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Washington 1973-75 biennium, approximately \$130 million have been spent on the provision of all types of library service for a state population of approximately 3 million people. When considering a fully cooperative library/information service system, it is necessary to consider *all* service outlets already existing — i.e., public libraries, academic, school and special libraries, and the holders of unique informational resources, such as galleries, museums and nonprint media centers.¹ In determining expenditures in Washington state all sources of service were included. Similarly, when speculating about total library service through a cooperative system, all potential service outlets are considered.

In Washington, as in all other states, taxpayers are concerned with obtaining the maximum return for each dollar invested. It must therefore be asked: Do the people of the state receive their dollar's worth in library/information services from their state-funded programs? Can expenditures for library/information service be reduced or eliminated? If not, why not? Will cooperative systems provide more and/or better service?

IMPORTANCE OF LIBRARY/INFORMATION SERVICE

In Washington, public library service is considered a basic service that must be provided to all people. According to state law, "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State, as a part of its provision for public education, to promote the establishment and development of public library service throughout its various subdivisions."² This 1935 statement in the Washington laws codifies the existence of public library service. In order to meet the intent of the law during the 1970s, development of maximized services for the users of libraries through the development and operation of cooperative programs has been essential. Library/information service today is far more complex than in the 1930s — in considering service today it is necessary to consider library/information service from the variety of libraries operated to meet a wide range of user goals and objectives. As outlined in *A Proposed Library Network for Washington State* there are significant implications of the cooperative network program:

- 1) It implies a degree of "democratization of information," in which all information is made as uniformly available as feasible. In doing so, it is clear that we are not talking about a leveling of resources, however. Rather we are talking about a formal

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mechanism by which major resources are protected and yet made readily available.

- 2) It implies a steady increase in the ability to serve at all points of service. This means the building up of appropriate local collections to meet immediate needs as well as to provide the ability to draw on larger resources.
- 3) It implies a cooperative sharing among libraries, independent of their administrative base, be it municipality, school district, industrial concern, or institution of higher learning.
- 4) It implies a division of function based upon efficient utilization of the cooperative network, and not upon administrative boundaries. Thus, delivery of materials is made through the most convenient local agency and not through some administrative hierarchy. The channels that deliver material will often not be those that requested it.
- 5) It implies an increasing degree of specialization in the collections and interests of individual libraries, so that intellectual and financial resources are not dissipated in duplication of broadly available material.
- 6) It implies a sense of responsibility by the individual library to more than its own constituency, including a willingness to serve others and to support the costs of operating larger collections on which it may draw.
- 7) It implies an increasing concentration of equipment — for data processing and communication — at clearly defined points, thus providing a rationale for installation of specific levels of equipment.
- 8) It implies a willingness on the part of libraries to cooperate in a voluntary, but responsible, manner, including a willingness to accept certain common standards of cataloging, collection, and methods of operation.
- 9) Finally, but in some ways most importantly, it implies the creation of a new view of the library — on the part of librarians and users — as the place to go for information service of all kinds.³

The public library is probably the only public agency devoted to education (or learning) available to all people within the society. At one time in our history the library was called every man's university. The library has become a community center, a place through which learning resources are obtained, a recreational facility, a political activism center, and an edifice to which citizens of a community point

with pride. The ability to access and utilize information can be the basis for economic and political power. The successes in our society are based on our ability to use information in a productive way, as well as our ability to obtain it.

Johnson reports three major changes in our society: (1) proliferation of knowledge, (2) scientific and technological advances, and (3) urbanization.⁴ These changes have caused, according to Johnson, shorter working hours and more leisure activity, population growth, and an affluent society. As our society is undergoing change, the library is also changing. Tomorrow's library may become a knowledge resource center and as such play a major role in alleviating today's problems of informational materials logistics.⁵

As knowledge resource centers, libraries may become total community centers providing all of the informational services required to operate within our society. As total library/information service becomes available to a society (or a community), the ways in which services and information are provided may change.⁶ The sources for this information need not be limited just to those held in the collection but may include social counselors, medical practitioners, crisis clinicians, and legal advisors. Here the library begins to offer services normally provided, to some extent, by other social and health service agencies.

Today we also need to consider the possibility that commercial organizations, with a profit motive, may be able to provide library/information service in a more cost-efficient way than is now done in many libraries. Possibly, information services can be provided as a public utility, either by governments or by private enterprise.

With the application of new types of technology, telecommunications, and computers, the provision of services takes on a new perspective. The concept of local or community libraries begins to be challenged, since information can be provided from remote data bases and the computer can be used as a tool to facilitate a more efficient management system for the operation of library/information service programs. With the application of technology, the costs for providing service can be better documented, and the recipients of the service therefore may be appropriately charged.

Before we can develop programs for the future, we must define the goals to be attained by our library/information service system. We need to define the product or service to be provided by our libraries as well as the way we will work to produce those services or products.⁷ It seems axiomatic that the future will call for more interlibrary cooperation

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and intrastate coordination of the provision of services. Two important questions need to be asked: Who determines the goals for “our” library/information service outlet? Who decides how our activities will be carried out in order to meet these goals?

WHO DETERMINES THE GOALS FOR LIBRARY PROGRAMS?

All programs serving people, like library programs, will have goals determined to some extent by the people being served, as well as by the specialist employed to provide the service. As Walter Stone stated, “In recent years, the library function has become too important in society to be entrusted solely to librarians (even when limited to service with print) or to any other single professional communications group.”⁸ Determination of programs for library/information service outlets should be equally controlled, as shown in Figure 1. This is equally true for a self-sufficient program as it is for one that interrelates with other programs.

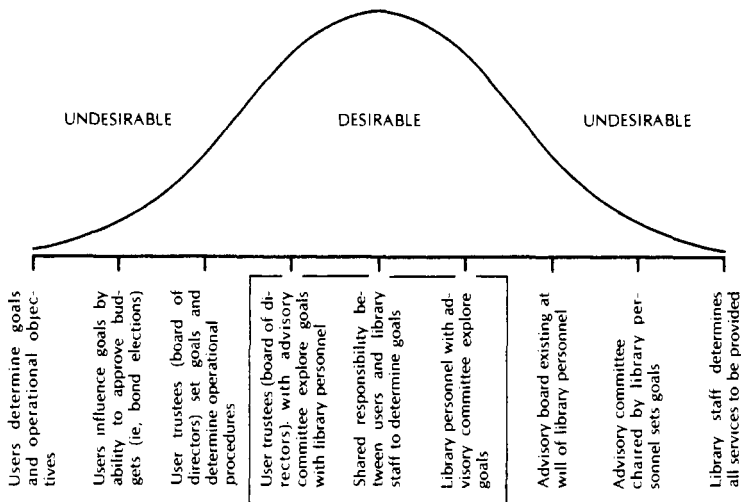


Fig. 1 — Program - Goal Determination

As plans for intrastate systems are developed, whether based on cooperation or mandate, it seems desirable that all parties involved—providers and consumers—have a role to play in determining both the goals of the system and the strategies for attaining the goals. The Library Services and Construction Act required that each state operate an advisory council on libraries. These councils were to determine the long-range program for the provision of library services in the state. It

would seem that this council is a logical place to commence the processes of defining goals for library programs. The council should assume this responsibility and must, therefore, be independent of control from the state library, legislature, or any other power body. The Washington State Advisory Council on Libraries (WSACL) consists of fifteen members, seven of whom are classed as library users. Appointments to the council are made by the Washington State Library Commission and the Washington Library Association.

The WSACL has played a major role in determining not only the goals and operational objectives for library service, but also has been involved in considering activities that might lead to the attainment of the defined objectives.⁹ This council allows the professionals to step back and look at the total library/information service picture, thus providing the opportunity for new insights into the programs to be developed and operated.¹⁰

If the intrastate cooperative system is to have even a remote chance for success, the decisions establishing the system and guiding its operation need to be shared by all parties involved. Cooperative systems are based on communication. Participation in decision-making requires communication of ideas. Decision-making in a cooperative system will be based on achieving consensus — the democratic process, a fragile but workable process. Leadership is the key element to fostering a truly cooperative democratic library/information service on a statewide basis. Once goals are determined, it is necessary to define operationally program objectives and then decide how programs will operate to meet the objectives.

PROGRAM OPERATION

Determining the operational programs to meet the goals defined is, generally, the responsibility of the providers of the service. The programs will focus on meeting specific objectives. Generally, these objectives will be operationally defined, and will be relatively short range in nature. The WSACL, since it has among its members library administrators and library trustees, is in a position to speculate about specific operational activity that might be considered in order to attain the program goals and objectives. For example, in the research and planning area the council held the following objective: "To obtain and/or update information needed in planning for future library development."¹¹ The council then proceeded to prepare specific activities that might lead to the attainment of the objective:

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- 1) To analyze current and projected census figures and other indicators to identify the state's population in terms of ethnic, social, economic, and physical characteristics; such analysis to be accompanied by and related to a profile of the state's geography, topography, and economic bases as they relate to the provision of library services.
- 2) Identification of what the non-users of publicly supported libraries want or need is an essential element in planning for library service. It is, therefore, intended to request of the legislature funds to conduct a survey of non-users to determine:
 - a) If information such as could be found in publicly-supported libraries is accessed, where it is accessed;
 - b) Non-users' perceptions of what library services not now provided should be provided, where they should be made available and whether such provision would make the non-user a user;
 - c) An indication of the non-users' understanding of how libraries are supported and how they are managed.To aid in integrating total state services, it is anticipated that item (a) above would also indicate what other library a citizen uses if he does not patronize his public/school/academic library.
- 3) To develop a data collection system which would provide information on a continuous basis concerning the materials and personnel resources of all types of libraries.
- 4) To request of the legislature funds for an indepth study of the kinds and quality of library services available in the state's common schools (K-12).
- 5) The lack of *qualitative* standards for evaluation of library programs, as well as the desire to adapt national quantitative standards to the state level, resulted in the appointment of an Advisory Council Committee on Criteria for Library Programs. Target date for completion of the committee's task is 1974, at which time its output will be used to evaluate current library services and plan for future development.
- 6) To establish within the State Agency, or at some other appropriate location, an evaluation function for on-going analysis of the level of attainment of the objectives listed in this plan, as well as those identified in proposals for which LSCA or state funding has been or will be granted.
- 7) To analyze the role of the State Library in light of planned and potential developments.¹²

A LIBRARY—A PLACE AND A SET OF FUNCTIONS

Rather than thinking of a library as a place, one should think of it as a set of activities, systems, a staff of people, a collection of resources, and interrelationships between these that, when combined, allow for the provision of service. That service is making information available to be utilized.¹³ The library is the sum of all of the parts included in the program's operation.

The building of a statewide library/information service system calls for the development of interrelationships through cooperative and managed programs that will allow for a maximization of information services to all people. One fact with which we must live is that in meeting the goals of tomorrow we must start with the resources we have today — including the existing library programs and all that they represent.

Looking at the work of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) and its projected goals for nationwide library/information service, it is obvious that not one of the fifty states has total library/information service that may be considered adequate by the NCLIS or the residents of that state. Cooperation continues as a determined strategy that can help facilitate the provision of services.

It is necessary to remember that a truly cooperative system is undoubtedly one of the most fragile arrangements that can be developed for the provision of public services. However, cooperative systems on an intrastate basis are the most reasonable means of attaining the goal of total library/information service.

COOPERATION — WHAT IS IT?

Like innovation, cooperation is hard to define and evaluate.¹⁴ Cooperation can be defined as the association of people or agencies in activities with common goals or objectives and with the intent of providing specific benefits for all. The key concept is that the benefits derived are shared by all. The verb *cooperate* implies combining, acting in concert, joining forces, working toward a common cause, and sharing successes and failures. On a statewide basis we must cooperate to meet all of the goals of library service. Unless there are benefits evident that will be obtained by acting in concert with other libraries, there is no reason to develop a cooperative system.

STRENGTHS OF COOPERATIVE SYSTEMS

Development of cooperative systems will be the responsibility of a

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group of people. As goals are defined and specific objectives determined for cooperative programs, the development of a corporate mind should take place. One of the significant strengths in bringing people together for problem solving is the creation of this corporate mind. It is assumed that the creative output of the group will be greater than the combined creativity of the individual members.

The concept of cost avoidance is one that must be explored as cooperative systems are developed. The reduction of expenditures should not be regarded as the only justification for forming cooperative systems. Cost avoidance is, however, an acceptable justification for initiating the consideration of a cooperative effort.

Collective action in a cooperative system usually brings satisfaction to the parties involved. Acting in concert with one's colleagues in solving problems is usually professionally rewarding and brings a satisfaction and strength that may justify cooperative systems. The public demonstration of cooperative programs is usually a very favorable activity for political interests.

WEAKNESSES OF COOPERATIVE SYSTEMS

If certain members within an intrastate cooperative system are only consumers of shared service, the cooperative system is destined to failure. Cooperative systems are built on the interdependence of all components in the system. There must be elements that all members of the cooperative system can provide and elements from which all members can benefit.

Another potential weakness is the consumption of energy in the development of cooperatives. In a cooperative system decisions are usually achieved by consensus. The democratic method that is essential for the successful operation of cooperative systems is however, a very inefficient decision-making process.

Another weakness that must not be overlooked is the difficulty in determining the commitments of all cooperating parties. Gamesmanship takes place as cooperative systems are explored.

Cooperation must be viewed as an extremely fragile arrangement. The system based on cooperation will exist only as long as the parties involved continue to cooperate. Not only can confidence in the cooperative effort be broken by a lack of performance from weak cooperating parties, but also by a lack of genuine commitment by key members. Intrastate cooperative systems are probably the best structure available to help maximize the provision of total library/information service.

ALTERNATIVES TO COOPERATION

A basic assumption is that working together is a highly productive approach to problem-solving, problem definition, and the generation of ideas about possible solutions or the determination of alternative solutions.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

Cooperation is based on a willingness to work together to achieve mutual benefits. One alternative to cooperation is the mandating of statewide cooperation. With autocratic administration all segments of the library/ information service community will work for the provision of maximized library service for the people in the state; it is ordered and thus becomes law. In this system the state is responsible for saying what will and will not be done. The state will undoubtedly base its decisions on the ideas of the consumers of library service and of the providers of that service at the local level. The key element, nevertheless, is that everyone *must* "cooperate" in this system.

Self-sufficiency, when one need not obtain anything from anyone else, makes cooperation unnecessary. If a program is self-sufficient, then it really need not share its wealth with other programs that are not self-sufficient as a means of "entitling" itself to receive materials from other programs. Interlibrary loan, as it exists today, is based on the concept of those having the resources loaning them to those that do not. The basic assumption of cooperation is that everyone will loan to everyone else; however, if there is nothing to lend, there is nothing to fear by cooperation. Since self-sufficiency is highly unlikely to be achieved by any of the library programs as we know them today, another alternative to cooperation, though undesirable, is the continued provision of inadequate services.

By contracting services to a commercial firm or to another larger library/information service unit, it is possible to avoid the necessity of providing direct services. It is the contractor's problem to fulfill the terms of the contract. A previously determined remuneration is a very effective way to obtain and to provide services. Contracting to obtain or to provide services does not always imply cooperation. Cooperative programs, however, may be formalized and strengthened by contracting or by exchanging letters of understanding between all parties involved.

When one library is the customer of another, this means that an agreement must be reached about precisely what services are to be

provided and what the amount of remuneration will be. This agreement will allow the customer to hold the seller accountable for the provision of services spelled out in the contract — a viable alternative to cooperative systems.

However, all indications are that maximized library/information service can be provided in a state by the development and operation of cooperative service programs. As weak and fragile as they may be, they appear to be the best strategy to meet the goals identified for library/information service programs.

PLANNING FOR INTRASTATE COOPERATION

Many cooperative programs develop as short-range solutions to immediate problems. To determine whether a cooperative approach to achieving program goals is an acceptable and productive operational strategy, it will be necessary to know the following: (1) program goals—general statements of what is to be provided and to whom by the existence and operation of the library/information service program; (2) program resources—what is available to support the operation of the program. These resources include monies supporting operations, skilled people, tools for use in the operations, and external program support (through cooperative efforts); and (3) program objectives—what operational objectives are to be met as the program focuses on the goals.

Being skeptical about cooperative programs may be wise. As an operational strategy, cooperation is a costly way to meet objectives, but frequently it is the most effective. By constantly questioning, "why cooperation?" it may be possible to prevent the consumption of a program's scarce resources in planning for and participating in cooperative programs not aimed at achieving the specific objectives or goals of that program.

Intrastate cooperation may be desirable when it: (1) increases services available from the library/information service outlets to the people of the state; (2) increases efficiency in the development and management of the informational resources; (3) avoids increasing costs while increasing quality or quantity of services (assuming the services are aimed at attaining the program's goals); (4) provides professional satisfaction to the people involved in designing and operating the cooperative program; and (5) maintains interdependence (not just dependence) of the cooperating programs.

Intrastate cooperation starts with cooperative planning, which can take many forms, including:

1. Association leadership—professional associations representative of personnel in the information services field may assume an action-oriented posture by bringing people together for the purpose of program development.
2. State agencies—state libraries or other agencies can bring people together for the purpose of endorsing or developing a plan. Usually the agency has participants focus on problems the agency deems important.
3. Ad hoc groups—gatherings of interested people with no official base may address specific problems or plan specific programs. These ad hoc groups are usually action oriented, but are frequently ineffective because they lack a base from which to influence decisions.
4. Planning bodies—authority groups, such as state library commissions, can establish official participatory planning/development groups.
5. External planning requirements—as with the LSCA, external forces can provide the motivation to establish a planning body. (The LSCA requires that a state have a statewide advisory council to develop a long-range library program in order to qualify for federal funds under the act.)

Generally, all five of the preceding forms are valid planning and developmental bodies. In 1971 the WSACL was formed by the Washington Library Association and the Washington State Library Commission as an advisory body to the commission, the library association, and the Washington State Library. The WSACL was charged with the development of the long-range program for the provision of library services for the state. This body has the following characteristics:

1. The fifteen members, one-half of whom are library users, might include association leaders, library trustees, school district and college administrative officials, leaders of public interest associations such as Common Cause or League of Women Voters, etc.
2. Appointments to the WSACL carry an honor. Appointments are made by the Washington State Library Commission.
3. Fiscal and staff support is provided to the WSACL by the Washington State Library.
4. Chairing the WSACL is an identified leader—appointment to chair the council is made by the library commission.

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5. The WSACL usually meets bi-monthly.
6. Reports from the WSACL are made at association meetings, periodically to the Washington State Library Commission, and frequently in special WSACL meetings promoted as current status reports.
7. Interested groups may appoint liaison to the council and receive all council mailings, minutes, etc.
8. All WSACL meetings are publicly announced and open for participation.
9. Meetings are held at various locations around the state.

The WSACL is actively interested in all matters related to the provision of library/information service in Washington. The council was not assigned these responsibilities—it assumed them. The WSACL is a focal point for cooperative decision-making and cooperative developments within the state. Matters of recent concern to the council include: state library budget requests, certification of librarians, position description used in searching for the director of the state library, criteria for evaluating programs, survey of informational resources held in the state, criteria for legislation which could establish a statewide system of public libraries, programs for continuing education for library personnel, Washington Library Network automation projects, federal funding, and examination of the proposed national plan from the NCLIS. (Minutes of all WSACL meetings are documents available through the Washington State Library. They are not indexed but may be requested according to date of meeting.)

As the WSACL assumed its responsibility of defining a long-range program for library/information service for the state, it formed a series of task forces and committees. These task-oriented groups actually became the working or research arm of the council. At one point, nearly 200 people were in some way officially related to the work of the council by appointment to a committee or task force. The long-range program eventually developed by the WSACL for the state was a direct result of the work of these groups.

A considerable amount of learning took place as council participants were exposed to new ideas and new ways to meet the service needs of their patrons. They became aware of the inadequacies of their existing library/information service programs.

In 1971, the WSACL attempted to develop a long-range program for library services, with the program being presented to the public in

1972. A year later it was revised and prepared for implementation. The program's working document contains the following sections: (1) statement of the mission of libraries in Washington, (2) goals for the provision of library/information service to all people in the state, (3) objectives, stated in operational terms, that when implemented will produce specific results related to the attainment of the goals, and (4) proposed activities leading to program objectives.¹⁵

THE DECISION-MAKERS

When undertaking any cooperative program, the decision-makers must be involved from the outset.¹⁶ Frequently, participants planning cooperative activities need to return to the administration of their program and "sell" the idea to the decision-makers. All too frequently, the decision-makers pocket veto the idea (make no decision), or identify the reasons why it cannot work. Occasionally, cooperative programs are implemented and the administration is never consulted. Ironically, these programs have frequently proven successful.

Cooperative planners need to make all of their decisions public, which can best be accomplished by making the decisions in a public forum. The Washington State Advisory Council on Libraries was such a forum and it also reported to all concerned the specifics of decisions, including the names of those involved in reaching them. These procedures imply decision-making by consensus, and the efforts helped to develop an action plan with support.

A PLAN WITH SUPPORT

The Washington plan focuses on the provision of service to people. It does not focus on the administration of libraries. Cooperation is implied in the plan since the goals cannot be attained without shared efforts. By utilizing a supportable set of objectives, the cooperating parties learned to work together.

The WSACL provided ample opportunity for the surface to be scratched — even marred, reshaped, and rebuilt. Decision-makers either joined in the process, taking risks at making decisions that might affect them, or they were left standing on the sidelines by their participatory colleagues. Through the open exchange of ideas fostered by the WSACL, it became evident that decision-making by group consensus was possible. Honest differences of opinion continued to exist, debate raged as to the implementation of parts of the proposed

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program, but a sincere effort was made by those involved to find practical solutions to the problems defined.

PROCESSES FOR CHANGE

Any program that calls for change will generally be enhanced if an organized process of change is developed. People operating as change agents will generally help to facilitate the diffusion process.¹⁷ Change as a product is defined by Thelen as: "a situation characterized by these two criteria: there has been a semipermanent change in the force field—a new quasi-stationary equilibrium has been struck; and a major component within this new pattern is altered 'own' forces of the persons whose performance constitutes and maintains the change."¹⁸

In Washington state, as in other places,¹⁹ it was found that change agents in the library/information service field need the following characteristics:

1. respect, trust, and acceptance from the majority of their colleagues
2. knowledge of library/information service program and processes
3. skills with interpersonal communications and organizational development
4. process orientation, humanistic in its thrust, to the analysis of problems and proposing of solutions
5. ability to allow other people to get credit for success programs which may have been stimulated by the change agents
6. involvement at a meaningful level with associations
7. mobility among the people involved in developing new programs—change agents, as cosmopolites, facilitate communications (carry messages)
8. knowledge of the politics of the library/information service field.

Those appointed to leadership positions of the WSACL possessed these characteristics and functioned effectively as change agents. In Washington, the professional excitement was maintained at a high level as changes in the library/information service field were pursued, partially due to the quality of participation by the change agents involved.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Cooperative planning and implementation, based on decision-making through consensus, is graphically presented in Figure 2. Bringing the individual programs and their goals into focus,

combined with the focusing of the many diverse ideas held by operators of the individual programs into an intrastate cooperative, will produce positive results—the outcome of which may be measured by increased service to patrons.

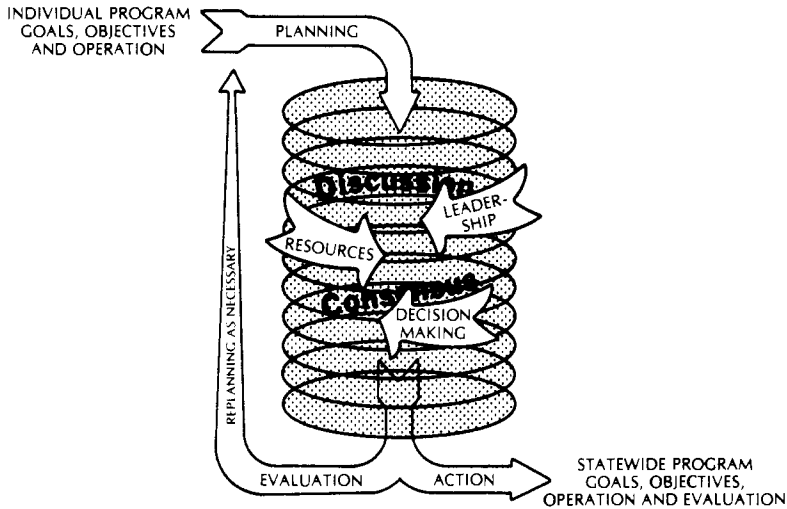


Fig. 2 — Decision Making and Program Implementation

It was believed that the utilization of participatory decision-making for both planning and operation would bring to bear the corporate mind to find acceptable strategies to implement programs that will meet defined program objectives. The implementation of a long-range program has become a shared responsibility in the state of Washington. The Library Futures Planning Task Force was chosen to facilitate the sharing of that responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LONG-RANGE PROGRAM

In January 1974, the Library Futures Planning Task Force was created as an action-oriented team to refine, into operational specifics, parts of the WSACL long-range program. The task force was to assist with the implementation of the program. In April 1974, the task force began its work with the assumption that its objectives would be met by July 1975, when the task force would disband. Operationally, the task force was attached to the Library Development Division of the

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Washington State Library and served as a staff extension of the WSACL.

The cooperative approach to decision-making, program development, and program implementation provides the focus of the task force. It was composed of two professionals and supportive staff. Operating as change agents, the team traveled throughout the state, facilitating developmental and implementation efforts of Washington's newly accepted long-range program for statewide library/information service.

The task force was successful in rallying forces behind the implementation of the agreed-to program. Along with successes have been failures, most of which are the results of expecting too rapid an acceptance of new programs.

FROM PLAN TO PROGRAM

The task force then faced the challenge of bringing together the elements of the developing programs into a coordinated statewide services system. Intrastate cooperative programs were developed following a rather common sequence of steps: (1) definition of the goals and objectives; (2) development of strategies that would lead to the objectives; (3) determination of the resources needed to reach the objectives; (4) implementation of the strategies; and (5) evaluation to see if the objectives were met, redesigning strategies, and trying again, if necessary.

The Library Futures Planning Task Force in Washington had as a major responsibility the bringing together of the leadership in the library/information services field to design strategies to meet the objectives of the long-range program. The task force was to assist in finding the necessary resources to operate the programs and to facilitate the cooperative decision-making on how the programs would be administered and governed.

Cooperation is a fragile way to accomplish tasks, a cooperative chain being only as strong as its weakest link. Cooperation is a way to enhance present services without giving up the unique qualities of individual library programs. The strength of intrastate library/information service programs will be the base for the development of a national program for library and information service.

Two ideas for research emerge from the experience of cooperative planning in the state of Washington. First, research on the diffusion and adoption of innovations in the library/information service field is

worthy of study. Second, leadership in the field is undefined, and research on both what constitutes leadership and how it might be developed seem worthy of study. Hypothetically, the library field is no different from any other field in this sense, but evidence to support this assumption is still unavailable.

Resting in the hands of the few is the future of library/information service programs in Washington state. Taking this future into *our* hands as *we* make decisions about *our* programs' destinies is an assumed responsibility. However, it appears that together — cooperatively — we can achieve the goals we have set for our programs.

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12. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-51.
13. Stone, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
14. Drucker, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
15. Washington State Library, *op. cit.*

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